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ABSTRACT

The Illinois Fatherhood Initiative is a statewide non-profit organization whose mission is to connect children and fathers by promoting responsible fathering and helping equip men to become better fathers and father figures. This brochure was produced by the Illinois Fatherhood Initiative to help give fathers and communities the necessary tools to develop parenting skills. Sections of the brochure, which provide bulleted information, are: (1) "What Is Responsible Fatherhood?" (2) "Awareness of Your Child"; (3) "Ideas on Discipline"; (4) "Eight Steps for Better Listening"; (5) "Father to Son"; (6) "Father to Daughter"; (7) "Creative Activities To Do with Your Children"; (8) "Rights of Fatherhood"; (9) "Co-Parenting Tips for Non-Married Parents"; (10) "Father-Friendly Communities"; (11) "Ideas for Fatherhood Programs"; (12) "Fatherhood Programs"; (13) "Agency Resources"; and (14) "Recommended Readings on Fatherhood." (Contains 14 resources.) (EV)

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

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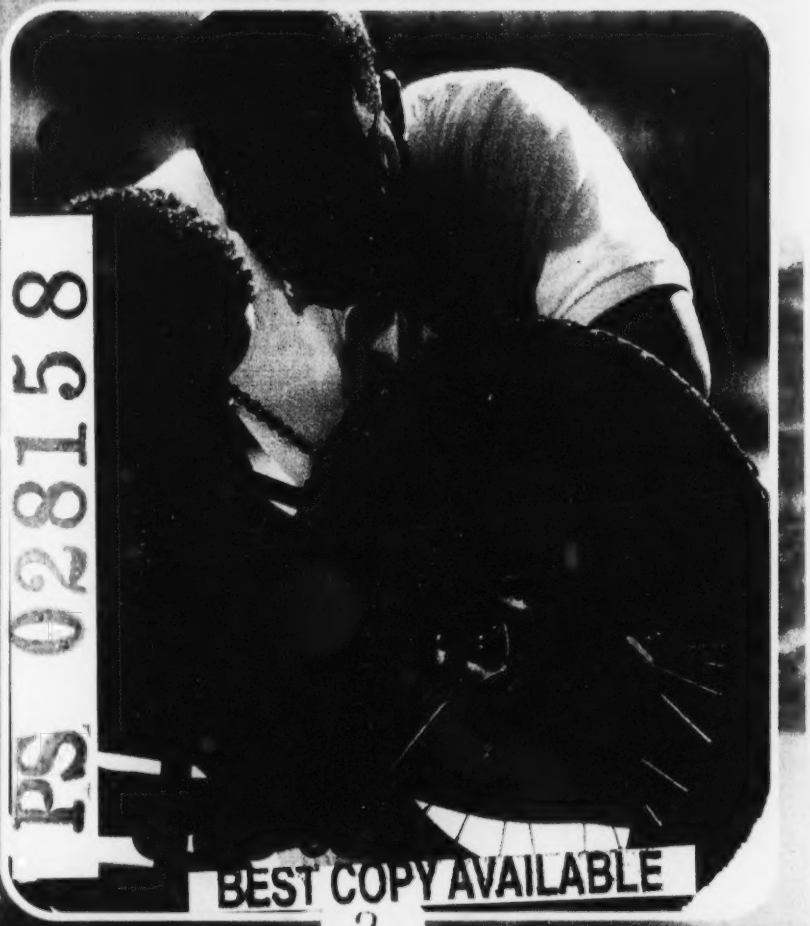
# ILLINOIS Fathers' RESOURCE Guide



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The **Illinois Fatherhood Initiative** is the country's first statewide non-profit fatherhood organization whose mission is connecting children and fathers by promoting responsible fathering and helping equip men to become better fathers and father figures. IFI is a volunteer lead organization founded with the belief that all children deserve to grow up with a loving, caring, and nurturing father or father figure.

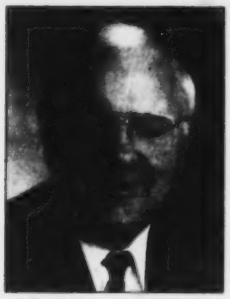
Unfortunately, over 1.1 million Illinois children are growing up in a home without their father. IFI has established strategic partnerships with the schools, other non-profits, governmental organizations, and corporations in an effort to accomplish its mission. IFI has also created a number of tools to help connect children and fathers. These resources are designed to emphasize the positive role men play in the lives of children. Here are two examples of some of IFI resources:

***"What My Father Means To Me"* essay booklet**. IFI has compiled a 16 page, four color booklet, containing 25 of the more than 140,000 essays received as part of its annual father-of-the-year essay contest. The essays are presented in the childrens' own handwritten words and are representative of what first through twelfth grade youth have to say about their dads. The second edition includes a six part curriculum for dads to reflect on important aspects of the child/father relationship and ways to resolve to do something to further connect with their child(ren).

**Faces of Fatherhood Calendar**. In an effort to make fatherhood a year round celebration, IFI helped create the award winning Faces of Fatherhood Calendar. In addition to including a dozen beautiful pictures of children and dads at work and play, the calendar is chock full of inspirational quotes, thoughts, and suggestions of "things to do together." The Calendar won two national awards, a silver medal for Best Educational Calendar, and a silver medal for Best Non-Profit Calendar.

For information on additional resources visit the IFI website at *www.4fathers.org* or call 1-800-996-DADS.

**Special thanks to**
**The Colorado Fatherhood Connection**
**for helping to compile the *Illinois Fathers' Resource Guide*.**



Dear Friends,

Parents have a responsibility to help their children grow up to be productive citizens. As a father and grandfather, I know the trials and triumphs associated with being an active and involved parent. As fathers we must provide our children with love and care to allow them to reach their full potential.

Fundamental changes in our society have affected the nature of fatherhood. Dads today must invest time and energy as a nurturing role model for their children. This brochure was created as part of the Illinois Fatherhood Initiative to give fathers and communities the necessary tools to develop parenting skills. I hope you will review it thoroughly and share it with another father.

Illinois must continue to be a place where children are protected and given every opportunity to thrive. This must include supporting and encouraging fathers in their ever-changing and challenging role.

Sincerely,

George H. Ryan

George H. Ryan
GOVERNOR

Greetings,

As a mother, my greatest joy is the time that I spend with my children. The greatest reward is the love they share. And helping them develop into good-natured, well-nurtured individuals is a responsibility I cherish.

Helping a child grow is indeed a responsibility. Teaching right from wrong, grace from disgrace, compassion from indifference takes an involved and connected parent. Children grow according to what they know. They look to their parents to set the example and follow the paths their parents have paved.

The Illinois Fatherhood Initiative provides insight and advice to parents for serving as positive role models and participating fully in their children's lives. This publication addresses the rights, responsibilities, and rewards of fatherhood. It offers parenting tips, resources for assistance, and suggestions for developing father-friendly environments and programs.

Raising a child is a privilege, a responsibility and a joy. The Illinois Fatherhood Initiative can help you make the most of the experience - for yourself and your family.

Sincerely,

Corinne Wood

Corinne Wood
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



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# WHAT IS Responsible FATHERHOOD?

Fathers must be encouraged in their efforts to raise children well. "Responsible fathers" do not pose a threat to their families. Responsible fathers are men who:

- Wait until they are emotionally and financially prepared to father children.
- Establish legal paternity when they biologically father a child.
- Actively share with the child's mother in emotional and psychological care of the child.
- Provide moral and philosophical guidance for their child:
  - Teach responsible behavior,
  - Instill character values,
  - Teach citizenship,
  - Teach by positive example.



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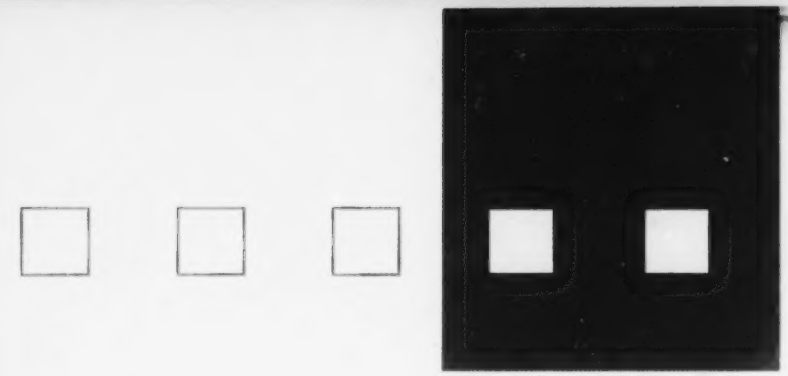

- Ensure their children have health insurance.
- Model responsible behavior (including paying bills on time, following through on responsibilities and commitments.)
- Conduct themselves with basic dignity and self-respect.
- Recognize that a father's health and vitality are interconnected with that of their child.
- Love, care for, and protect their child.
- Determine with the mother reasonable limits of tolerance and discipline.
- Prioritize quantity and quality time with their children.
- Maintain responsible relationships and separate problems in other relationships from the relationship with their child.
- Take responsibility for knowing basic life and child development skills such as changing diapers, fostering early child development and providing for a child's basic health needs.
- Recognize that fatherhood is a life-long commitment.
- Teach and raise children in a way that will help them be successful.
- Build their child's self-esteem, self-worth and self-confidence.
- Ensure their child is financially supported.
- Maintain responsible relationships as a part of a family and as a role model.

# Awareness
## OF YOUR CHILD

How well do you know your child? Here are a few questions to help you know your child better:

- Who is your child's all time hero?
- What are your child's most prized possessions?
- Who is your child's closest friend?
- What causes your child the greatest stress?
- What was your child's most prized accomplishment this past year?
- What was your child's biggest discouragement this past year?
- What is your child's favorite food?
- What member of your extended family does your child like the most?
- What would your child like to be when she grows up?
- What is your child's favorite television program or movie?
- What does your child like to do in her spare time?
- What is something that really upsets your child?
- If your child had $20 to spend, what would he buy?
- What does your child like to do with you?
- What is the most important thing you need to discuss with your child in the next six months?

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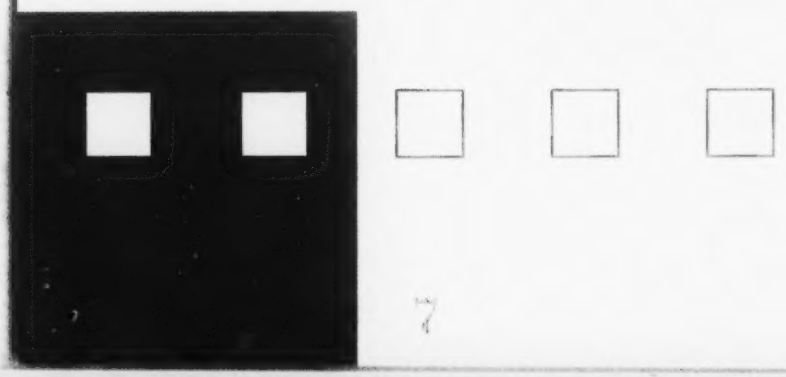

IDEAS ON

# Discipline

The goal of discipline is to help children build their own self-control. Discipline techniques are often age specific and may need to change as your child grows and develops. When your child makes a mistake, focus on the behavior not the child. Remember that it only becomes a mistake when you don't learn from it.

### Tips for Encouraging Appropriate Behavior:

- Help children clearly understand your expectations of their behavior.
- Discuss consequences of misbehavior before it occurs. Have the child help set the consequence.
- Give praise often, so children know how well they are doing.
- Realize problems can be expected when children are bored, tired or frustrated.
- Give your child safe choices.
- Don't wait to deal with your child until you have been pushed past your limit.
- Teach your child appropriate behavior by modeling appropriate behavior.

### Tips for when Misbehavior Occurs:

- Step in immediately when your child is harming themselves or others.
- Realize that calling attention to the misbehavior might be enough, if the behavior stops.
- Let your child know why he is being disciplined, if behavior continues.
- Be consistent in disciplining your child to avoid confusion. Make sure both you and your child's mother agree on discipline styles and expectations.
- Use calm, positive words instead of threatening words.
- Make sure the consequences fit the behavior.
- Make sure consequences are realistic and enforceable.
- Be consistent with enforcing consequences.



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# Eight STEPS FOR BETTER Listening

- Face your child squarely. This says that you are available to your child.
- Adopt an open posture. Crossed arms and legs say, "I'm not interested." An open posture shows your child that you are open to him and what he has to say.
- Put yourself on your child's level. Kneel, squat down, lay across his bed, lean toward him. This communicates "I want to know more about you."
- Maintain good eye contact. Have your ever talked to someone whose eyes seem to be looking at everything in the room but you? How did that make you feel? That is not something you want your kids to experience with you.
- Stay relaxed. If you fidget nervously as your daughter is talking, she'll think you'd rather be somewhere else. That's counterproductive.
- Watch your child. Learn to read her nonverbal behavior: posture, body movements and gestures. Notice frowns, smiles and raised eyebrows. Listen to voice quality and pitch, emphasis, pauses and inflections. The way in which your child says something can tell you more than what she is actually saying.
- Actively give your child nonverbal feedback. Nod. Smile. Raise your eyebrows. Look surprised. These small signals mean more than you realize. They'll encourage your child to open up even more and let you into his life.
- The last step to listening is speaking. But, before you give your response, restate in your own words what he has told you. That proves that you were listening, and it gives the child the opportunity to say "Yes, that's it exactly" or "No, what I really mean is this..." Remember, the goal of communication is understanding.

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# Father to Son

- Teach him to care for himself and others. This means learning how to eat well, get enough rest, exercise and develop self-defense skills. It also means being able to see other points of view, listening and empathizing.
- Allow him the full range of emotions. Help him learn that real men can be afraid, can hurt and can cry. Boys need to find safe places to cry where they will not be ridiculed. It is important for fathers to model appropriate anger that does not threaten, control or hurt anyone else. Anger is a necessary emotion, but needs to be vented with care and consideration of others.
- Encourage him to respect girls and women as equals, rather than objects to be controlled, dominated or manipulated. Discourage condescending jokes and put-downs. If your son makes a negative comment about women, step in and correct him.
- Encourage him to learn negotiating skills. Teach him that compromise is a necessary part of human relationships and is not a sign of weakness or a lack of "backbone."
- Help him take responsibility for his own behavior. Don't encourage a "boys will be boys" attitude that excuses selfishness, impulsiveness, and domination. If he hurts someone, encourage him to apologize.
- Teach him that it's all right for a man to ask for help, support, and healthy affection. Let him know how much you value your friendships and partnerships.
- Teach him that masculinity is about having moral principles and being a man of character.
- Limit the violence that he watches on television, in video games and movies.
- Help him to find other friends who are supportive. Let him know that boys who are sarcastic, shaming and harassing are behaving out of their own weakness.
- Discuss healthy sexuality with him, and the importance of being responsible.

**Reprinted with permission from the Fathers' Resource Center*
*"15 Ways Fathers Can Nurture Non-Violent Sons"*
*By Michael Obstaz, Ph.D.*



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# FATHER TO Daughter

- Listen to her. Earn the right to speak by listening first. She needs to be assured that you love her no matter what.
- The father who has worked on being a sensitive listener will reap the benefits of his daughter's trust; he will be the natural person to go to when she has questions about boys or men.
- She needs to hear your opinions and feelings about relationships.
- Model positive masculinity; make your family a high priority, keep your promises and invest in the lives around you.
- Model healthy behavior toward women.
- Call ahead, get dressed up and take her out on a date.
- Take her shopping and do your best to identify her unique tastes.
- Tell her that she is beautiful inwardly. Point out some specific examples.
- Discuss what age she will be allowed to wear makeup.
- When your teenage daughter breaks up with her boyfriend, take her to dinner and let her know that there is a man who will always accept and love her.
- Ask her what she enjoys doing with you, and then set up time to do that with her.
- Show your daughter approval and affection, or she may think that you don't care or that something is wrong with her.



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# CREATIVE Activities TO DO WITH YOUR Children

- Plan family meals when everyone has a chance to share a particular experience, thought or feeling they have had that day.
- Go for walks together.
- Listen to your child when he needs to talk.
- Meet your child's friend who you don't already know.
- Visit your child's school or classroom. Meet her teacher.
- Watch your child as he plays; observe his creativity in his play.
- If your children are not living with you, commit yourself to a phone call or lunch date.
- Visit the Children's Museum.
- Expose your children to other cultures by inviting ethnic and international friends to your home.
- Ask your child what is the one thing you do that he or she would like to learn, and then teach it.
- Put an encouraging note in the textbook of your child's worst subject.
- Teach your older children to check and add oil to the car.
- Take your children to the library and give them time to browse and check out some books.
- Discuss with your children some goals for the school year – theirs and yours.
- Encourage your children to join various clubs and organizations.
- Ask your child what she wants to be as an adult, then take her to visit such a workplace.
- Listen to your child's favorite music. Ask him what he likes about the music.
- Read a newspaper article to your child and ask what she thinks about it.
- Discuss an area in which you and your child disagree – and listen!
- Go to the zoo and laugh together.



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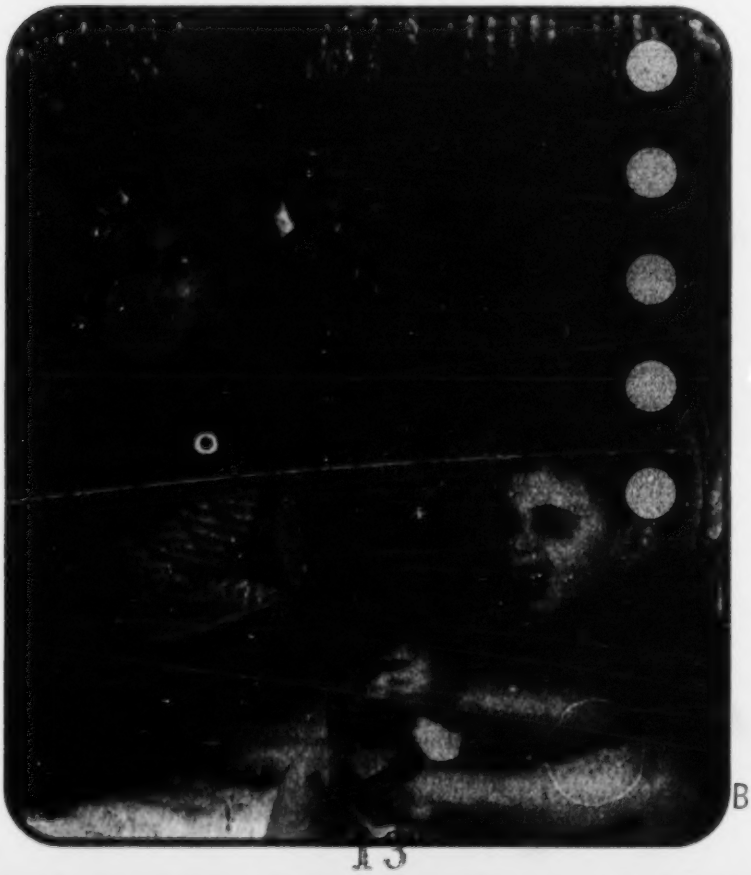
# Rights
## OF FATHERHOOD

Every child has a right to a responsible, loving and involved father. Men who are responsible fathers should be granted rights that acknowledge and support their commitment to being better dads. These fathers have a right to:

- know and establish themselves legally as a father.
- have a relationship with their children.
- be involved in their child's development.
- not be discriminated against.
- be geographically close to their children.
- have equal access to their child.
- environments which are "father-friendly."
- the community's respect for their role as a father.
- appropriate resources to be a good father.
- learn how to become responsible fathers.



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CO-PARENTING

# Tips FOR NON-MARRIED Parents

It is a child's right to have the best relationship possible with both biological parents. Children need to feel loved by both parents and need to know that they do not have to choose one parent over the other. When parents are out of conflict, children can prosper. Parents will have to work together for the rest of their lives – not until their child turns 18. Having good co-parenting skills will benefit everyone. It is possible to have a functional divorced family.

- Keep a flexible routine and leave room for spontaneity. Help your child feel that he has two homes, mom's and dad's, where he feels free to come and go. Live as close to each other as possible.
- Talk to each other and keep focused on the subject of your children. Children should not serve as the direct line of communication between the two of you.
- Take the anger out of your communications. Do not use your child as a way to get back at each other or validate your anger with each other.
- Get help dealing with the inevitable anger from a broken relationship. Learn to communicate in a less reactive, more proactive, way.
- Help to prepare your child for visits. Be positive about the experience.
- Share information. Have a calendar with all the family engagements written on it and let the other parent know of any changed plans.
- Set up a system for monthly phone calls or meetings with a specific list of required issues to discuss.
- Never talk badly about the other parent in front of your children.

For more information on co-parenting skills and resources:

**Mediation Council Of Illinois**

111 North Wabash Avenue, Chicago Illinois 60602
(312) 641-3000

Co-Parenting After Divorce, Diana Schulman (1997)

Mom's House, Dad's House, Isolina Ricci (1982)



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FATHER -FRIENDLY

# Communities

A "father-friendly" environment could be any institution which supports and values the unique contribution fathers make to their children's lives. Here are a few tips for making your community more "father-friendly," and ultimately family centered.

- Talk with fathers and listen to their needs.
- Promote father-child activities.
- Provide information and programs that are specific to the needs of fathers.
- Increase positive images of dads with their kids.
- Incorporate the issues of fathers into gender diversity and sensitivity training for staff.
- Help develop and expand child care programs.
- Provide more male teachers, nurses, providers and volunteers.
- Respect a father's right to information regarding his child.

More ideas for...

Schools:

Have a "Take Your Dad to School" event.
Host a "Donuts with Dad" program.
Participate in the Illinois Fatherhood Essay Contest.

Workplaces:

Offer a brown bag parenting seminar specifically for dads.
Offer a paternal leave policy for fathers.

Hospitals:

Support and provide programs for new dads.
Offer paternity establishment projects.

Churches:

Start a fathers' support group.
Provide counseling to couples getting married.

State Agencies & Non-Profits:

Hang posters with positive images of fathers.
Sponsor father-son and father-daughter events.

Media:

Run a public service announcement on responsible fatherhood.
Counter negative stereotypes of fathers by portraying them in a positive light.



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# Ideas FOR FATHERHOOD Programs

Fathers are an asset to a child's development, and communities can become an asset to a father's development. Here are a few strategies for an effective fatherhood program:

- Promote partnerships between fathers. Match up new dads with current participants and form peer support groups.
- Provide fathers with information on child development. Teach them techniques for raising sons and daughters of all ages.
- Make it easy for fathers to attend activities. Have flexible schedules, provide or pay for transportation, and offer child care.
- Offer life skills training. Teach classes on parenting, relationships, anger management and leadership.
- Help identify the abilities and needs of fathers (S.W.O.T.: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats). Provide literacy, job training, and employment opportunities, information and referrals.
- Have men in the leadership roles of the program. Fathers prefer to have males in leadership roles for the program to succeed. Yet, women can play a key role in involving men and developing quality programs.
- Promote tolerance. Encourage cultural diversity and acknowledge the important role of mothers.
- Teach standards and accountability for fatherhood. Let dads know there are rights, responsibilities, resources, and rewards ("4 Rs of Fatherhood") to being a good father.
- Listen and learn from fathers. Survey men for their ideas and interests, and let them know you value their opinions.
- Recognize all kinds of fathers. From teen dads, to men who serve as father-figures, to incarcerated fathers, remember that all dads need support.

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FATHERHOOD

# Programs

Illinois Fatherhood Initiative
P.O. Box 06260
Chicago, Illinois 60606-6260
1-800-996-DADS
dads@4fathers.org
***State-wide initiative to raise awareness of the importance of fathering and a network of direct service organizations.***

Paternal Involvement Project — Kennedy-King College
6800 South Wentworth Avenue – 4W22
Chicago, Illinois 60621
773-651-9262
***Comprehensive program to meet diverse needs of low-income fathers.***

The Father's Center of East St. Louis
Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois
4700 State Street, Suite 3A
East St. Louis, Illinois 62205
618-874-1701
***Comprehensive services to help men become better fathers.***

Forgotten Fathers' Program
Boys and Girls Clubs of Chicago
820 North Orleans
Chicago, Illinois 60610
312-627-2700
***Training for adolescent fathers on life skills, parenting and job preparation***

Ounce of Prevention Fund — Male Involvement Services
30 West Garfield
Chicago, Illinois 60609
773-373-0234
***Provision of "father-friendly" services within all programs in the agency.***

*The above is a partial list of programs in Illinois that are working with fathers or male role models. Call the Illinois Fatherhood Initiative for more complete information.*

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Families and Work Institute
The Fatherhood Project
330 Seventh Avenue
New York, New York 10001
www.fatherhoodproject.org

Fathers' Resource Center
5701 Single Creek Parkway, Suite 500
Brooklyn Center, MN 55430
612-560-8656

National Center for Fathering
P.O. Box 413888
Kansas City, Missouri 64141
1-800-593-DADS
www.fathers.com

National Center on Fathers & Families (NCOFF)
University of Pennsylvania
Graduate School of Education
3700 Walnut Street
Box 58
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6216
(215) 573-5500
www.ncoff.gse.upenn.edu

National Fatherhood Initiative
One Bank Street, Suite 160
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878
1-800-790-DADS
www.register.com/father



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AGENCY

# Resources

## General Assistance

Department of Human Services.....1-800-843-6154
Department of Public Aid .....1-800-252-8635
DHS NOW: Employer Client Hotline.....1-800-327-5627
Illinois State Board of Education .....217-782-4321

## Health

Immunization Hotline.....1-800-526-4372
DHS Help Me Grow Hotline .....1-800-545-2200
Women & Infant Care Hotline (WIC) .....1-800-545-2200
Kid Care Hotline.....1-800-226-0768

## Legal and Mediation Assistance

Mediation Council of Illinois.....312-641-3000
Chicago Volunteer Legal Services
Foundation .....312-332-1624
Chicago Bar Association Legal
Referral Service.....312-554-2001
Illinois Lawyer Referral
(outside of metropolitan Chicago).....217-525-5297
Children's Rights Council of Illinois .....847-374-0461

## Child Support/Paternity Establishment

Child Support Inquiry Line .....1-800-447-4278
Illinois Department of Public Aid
Child Support Enforcement
Non-Custodial Parent Services Unit .....312-793-7984
DPA Paternity Establishment .....1-888-855-2858
Department of Children & Family Services
Putative Father Registry .....1-800-420-2574

## Child Care/Family Support

Department of Children
& Family Services.....217-785-1700
Child Abuse Hotline .....1-800-252-2873
Illinois Department of Rehabilitation Services
Next Steps Program .....1-800-275-3677
Day Care Action Council of Illinois .....773-769-8000
Adoption Information Center of Illinois ....1-800-572-2390
DHS Teen Parenting Services .....1-800-842-1374
DHS Helpline:
Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities,
Persons with Disabilities,
Alcohol & Substance Abuse and
Women & Infant Children Services ....1-800-843-6154



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# RECOMMENDED Readings ON FATHERHOOD

## Books

The Expectant Father: Facts, Tips and Advice for Dads-to-Be. A. Brott and J. Ash, Abbeville Press, 1995.

The Prodigal Father: Reuniting Fathers and Their Children. M. Bryan, Clarkson Potter, 1997.

What My Father Means to Me: Children's Essays on Fatherhood. The Illinois Fatherhood Initiative, 1998.

Working Fathers: New Strategies for Balancing Work and Family. J. Levine, Addison-Wesley, 1997.

The Measure of a Man: Becoming the Father You Wish Your Father Had Been. J. Shapiro, Perigee Book, 1993.

FatherLove: What we need, What we seek, What we must create. R. Louv, Pocket Books, 1993.

Fatherhood. R. Parke, Harvard University Press, 1996.

Daddy's Home at Last. M. Singletary, Zondervan Publishing House, 1998.

Faith of our Fathers: African-American Men Reflect on Fatherhood. A Plume Book, 1996.

## Books for Children on Fathers

Daddy Calls Me Man. A. Johnson, 1997. Ages 1-3.

What Mary Jo Shared. J. Udry, 1996. Ages 3-5.

I Remember Papa. H. Ketterman, 1998. Ages 5-9.

In Daddy's Arms I Am Tall: African Americans Celebrating Fathers. 1997. Ages 6-12.

Father Figure. R. Peck, 1996. Ages 12 and up.

***For a detailed list of books for kids and dads, visit the www.amazon.com website.***



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